DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 419 804 SP 037 968

AUTHOR Reinken, Barbara J.
TITLE System of Collegiality: A Theory of Professional Collegial Relationships in Secondary Schools.
PUB DATE 1998-04-17
NOTE 26p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Diego, CA, April 13-17, 1998).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Collegiality; *Context Effect; *Educational Environment; High Schools; *Interpersonal Competence; *Secondary School Teachers; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Characteristics; *Teacher Collaboration

ABSTRACT

This paper explores high school teachers' professional collegial relationships, exploring teachers' perceptions of collegiality and contextual features that affect collegial relationships. The study involved 36 volunteer teachers from two urban midwestern high schools who completed a semi-structured interview. The interview focused on teachers' perceptions of collegiality and contextual factors. The study also utilized data from the Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching. The study found that there was a difference between definitions of professional collegiality depending on who was doing the defining (teacher, researcher, or reformer). Teachers had cultivated a complex culture of collegiality within which collegial relationships developed. The teachers made decisions about potential colleagues based on cultural values, collegial etiquette standards, and individually developed personal characteristics of other teachers. Contextual features such as issues, forms of collegiality, and organizational characteristics affected the determination of collegial relationships. Self-interest and personal needs were an underlying factor as teachers made decisions about who, when, where, and how to engage peers in collegial relationships. The results suggest that both schools maintained a number of collegial groups which, together, functioned as a collegial system. (Contains 51 references.) (Author/SM)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED 419 804

# SYSTEM OF COLLEGIALITY: A THEORY OF PROFESSIONAL COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

by

BARBARA J. REINKEN, Ph.D.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

B. Reinken

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Paper Prepared for Presentation at the
American Educational Research Association
San Diego, California
April, 1998

The author gratefully acknowledges the Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching from which this study was a small component of the larger research program within the Center's work.

SP037968

## Abstract

This paper explores high school professional collegial relationships. In completing the research on this paper, two areas of interest were explored: 1) teachers' perceptions of collegiality, and 2) contextual features that affect collegial relationships. A qualitative methodology was employed to gather data. Thirty six volunteer teachers from two urban high schools completed a semi-structured interview. Data from the Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching (CRC) was also utilized as this study was a special project within a larger national study.

The findings suggest that the phenomenon of teacher professional collegiality is complex. Teachers make decision about potential colleagues based on cultural values, collegial etiquette standards, and individually developed personal characteristics of other teachers. Furthermore, contextual features such as issues, forms of collegiality and organizational characteristics affect the determination of collegial relationships. Self-interest and personal needs are an underlying factor as decisions are made about who, when, where and how to engage peers in collegial relationships.

Based on these findings, a theory – the system of collegiality – is suggested as one way to understand the development and maintenance of professional collegial relationships. As reform policies focus on restructuring schools, the system of collegiality will give further understanding to the tensions between independence and community, and self-interests versus organizational interest.

In the last two decades, educational reformers have assumed that professional collegial arrangements would "enhance teachers' capacity for learning and problem solving, build solidarity and cohesiveness within schools and satisfy teachers' needs for affiliation" (Rowan, 1990, p. 374). In other words, professional collegial relationships are suggested as one way to reduce the teacher isolation presently found in schools and to improve the image of the profession as a whole (Grimmett & Crehan, 1989; Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975). Using this assumption, reform agendas based on prominent lines of research (e.g., effective schools, professionalization of teaching, teacher work/teacher change), suggest alternative ways to build school community (Brookover, et. al., 1979; Cohen, 1987; Hargraves, 1984; Huberman, 1993; Ogawa & White, 1994; Schiffer, 1980; Sykes, 1990; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994). Even though these reform proposals have conflicting ideas of how to build community, one component of these reforms is that the organizational structure should include teachers working together and engaging in fact-to-face interactions (i.e., professional collegiality) (Sergiovanni, 1992). The reasoning has been that teachers who engage in collegial relationships based on mutual examination of their work are better prepared to improve student learning, teaching, and teacher education (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). Furthermore, these relationships help teachers cope with the complex, non-routine work, that requires them to adapt flexibly and quickly to varied and specific demands (Little, 1990). In general, collegiality is thought to enhance the combined capacity of groups and organizations. In other words, "advocates have imbued [collegiality] with a sense of virtue" (Little, 1990, p. 509).

A close review of the collegiality literature, however, raises doubts about the positive effects that such an organizational structure could create because the term collegiality remains

conceptually vague and ideologically optimistic. First, the connection between collegiality and school improvement (i.e., change) may not be warranted. Groups bound by shared beliefs and purposes can as easily thwart change as promote it (Lightfoot, 1983; Segiovanni & Starrett, 1988). Second, collegiality as found in team collaboration does not add up to much (Little, 1987). Teachers engage in minimal planning and coordination rather than deep discussions of classroom practices (Cohen, 1981). Third, externally created programs (e.g., block scheduling, alternative teaching arrangements, school improvement programs, etc.) designed to promote collegiality rarely promote sustained collegial relationships (Metz, 1986). Teacher collegiality is based not only on contextual factors changed by such programs (e.g., time, schedules, number of students, subject matter), but also on social factors (e.g., personal beliefs, backgrounds, values) (Hargreaves, 1992; Johnson, 1990). Fourth, there are difficulties with how researchers have been predisposed to limit the definition of what constitutes collegial interactions and limit what is considered the work of collegial teachers.

Missing from the research literature is a broader understanding of what current professional collegial relationships entail on a daily basis and the contextual features related to professional collegial relationships. Recently, Little (1992) suggested that further research should take into account the situational variables that teachers describe as ways to explain for their actions as individuals and as part of a community. In completing such research, there should be an examination of community to better understand the formation of collegial groups, the multiple forms of collegiality individuals engage in, as well as the meaning of collegiality by educators in schools. Also there is a need to focus on advanced levels of schooling in organizational structures that are larger and more bureaucratic in nature. At present, most

literature on teacher professional collegiality focuses on elementary schools (Cohen, 1976; Little, 1981; Rosenholtz, 1989; Zahorik, 1987).

This paper presents findings from a doctoral dissertation in which teacher professional collegiality was studied in two urban secondary schools (Reinken, 1995). The purpose of the study was to extend the current research by developing a more robust conception of the phenomenon of teachers' professional collegiality and to generate hypotheses concerning this phenomenon at the secondary level. In completing the study, a theory about professional collegiality that occurs naturally in secondary schools was proposed. The importance of this theory is to suggest a more robust understanding of the professional interactions teachers engage in on a daily basis in large complex bureaucratic high schools.

## Background

The theoretical framework for this study was developed by first reviewing three varied perspectives that engage the phenomenon of collegiality as important to further developing the teaching profession (i.e., sociological literature, organizational literature concerning social context and school governance, and teacher work and teacher change literature). Underlying these perspectives were three basic characteristics important to understanding the phenomenon of professional collegiality. For the purpose of this study, these characteristics were defined as dimensions. These dimensions are interrelated and the basis of professional collegiality as a social action. Each dimension is explained in the following overview of the research literature.

### Sociological Perspective on Professional Collegiality

The first dimension, culture of collegiality, is found in the sociological literature on the professions. Collegiality is one of three attributes usually associated with the definition of a professional group (Starr, 1982). Collegial relationships are defined in this literature as

relationships between members of the same occupation who have a sense of belonging together and identifying with others in a common undertaking (Blumer, 1957; Gross, 1958). Specifically, there should be a feeling of intimacy and closeness based on a sense of common experiences, shared fate – what is good for one is good for all – and shared understanding of appropriate behavior. This definition places emphasis on shared attitudes, norms, and the formation of informal and formal associations (Bucher & Strauss, 1961; Freidson, 1984). Therefore, collegiality is based on the development of a culture that everyone shares and on the strength of the bonds that hold the group together within the culture. Furthermore, the strength of collegiality is determined by the extent to which socialization creates among members a singular view of work and how members are to relate to one another. Thus, this literature focuses on the culture shared among a vocation's members. This culture is seen as consisting of shared values, norms, beliefs, experiences, and meaning (Cogan, 1953). As a result, the sociological definition of collegiality is occupational unity expressed as a culture within an occupation that ascribes to and has a collection of norms, values, beliefs, dispositions, and attitudes that exist in the minds of organizational members and are used to guide and influence behaviors within the group or community.

Organizational Perspective on Collegiality

The second dimension, etiquette of collegiality, is found in the organizational literature on school improvement (i.e., effective school research and professionalization of teaching literature). This literature focuses on the organizational characteristics important to school improvement and / or change. As a result, attention is paid to the design of organizational interventions such that increased collegiality among teachers is fostered. These interventions

attempt to change the culture of the school generally or to change the governance of the school specifically.

The effective schools research seeks to identify school characteristics that attempt to change the school generally. Collegiality in this literature is often seen as an important organizational characteristic (Brookover et al., 1979; Cohen, 1987; Edmonds, 1983; McLaughlin, 1987; Richardson, 1990). Findings concerned with professional collegiality emphasize the school culture or school social organization. These findings focus on high staff expectations and morale, clear school goals, and a strong sense of community (Cohen, 1987; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Norms, attitudes, shared beliefs, and values of participating staff are important to the creation of a cohesive school community. Teachers who exhibit similar and uniformly high expectations for students, similar views of student ability, and similar school goals for students are seen as collegial. The result, as suggested by effective school research, is that collegiality can be based on the development of common organizational goals, objectives, mission, and beliefs. Thus, by creating, through formal means, a school community based on formal academic goals and objectives that govern faculty behavior, professional collegial relationships develop (Cohen, 1987).

The literature on professionalization of teaching also emphasizes the need for governance but uses a different approach (Hallinger & Richardson, 1988; Hargraves, 1984; Ogawa & White, 1994; Schiffer, 1980; Sykes, 1990). This literature suggests there is a need for teacher autonomy that fosters professional collegial relationships. In this literature, debureaucratization of the organization is valued. The assumption is that in moving toward an interdependent form of autonomy (i.e., shared decision-making across classrooms and the school) teachers would, as a collective unit, have a voice in determining the direction of the school community.

Consequently, restructuring of the occupation of teaching involves empowering teachers by giving them more control over standards of practice and norms of conduct (i.e., governance over their work). This professionalization would also involve teachers in more sharing, collaborating, and group decision-making about classroom work and school-wide issues. Thus, this literature also focuses on changing the structure of schools so that teachers have a more involved and have a central role in the development and maintenance of control and authority that regulates the activities of professional members. The result would be a change to the current structure of the profession and the structure of how schools are managed.

The above described organizational perspectives are based on creating a structure of collegiality (i.e., control that members of a group have over their work environment and peers) in which teachers are empowered to make decisions about professional work both inside and outside the classroom. An underlying principle is that collegial relationships are important to this structure. Institutions having collegial structures "are typically believed to conform to a recognizable pattern of authority to regulate the activities of their members" (Bess, 1988, p. 99). Therefore, structure of collegiality is typically defined as the pattern or design by which organizations are divided and integrated (Bess, 1988). In other words, collegiality as structure is associated with modes of control that link units of the organization both as individuals and groups.

In this study, etiquette of collegiality is used to describe the structure of collegiality found in organizational literature (Bess, 1988). Etiquette of collegiality refers to more than rules or patterns of authority that give teachers participatory rights in school decision making. Instead, it is based on a shared culture of collegiality that controls the behavior of members (Sykes, 1990).

Therefore, collegial etiquette is the organizational manifestation of cultural collegiality. It both symbolizes the culture and gives visible evidence that the culture can be maintained.

Teacher Work and Teacher Change Perspective of Collegiality

The third dimension, behavior of collegiality, refers to the actions and interactions among staff and between staff and others as guided by the culture and etiquette of collegiality. This dimension is best described in the teacher work and teacher change literature as forms of collegiality (i.e., social support, storytelling, aid and assistance, sharing, joint work) (Blase, 1987; Cohen, 1981; Cusick, 1983; Hammersley, 1984; Little, 1982; Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989). These forms give meaning to the behaviors employed by teachers as they develop collegial relationships (Hargreaves, 1993; Huberman, 1993; Little, 1990; Zahorik, 1987). While seemingly distinct, these forms in actuality meld together into a continuum that ranges from weak forms (e.g., social support) that are more independent in nature to strong forms (e.g., joint work) that are more interdependent in nature (Little, 1990). Thus, collegiality as described in this literature has a variety of definitions based on the varied forms. Even so, all definitions suggest relationships that are continuous, face-to-face, under public scrutiny, and collective in the identification and implementation of instructional, curricular, and management goals and objectives (Rosenholtz, 1989; Sergiovanni, 1992). Furthermore, the assumption held is that within each collegial form there is a culture of collegiality having norms and beliefs that guide the professional collegial relationship along with an etiquette of collegiality based on interdependence and collective autonomy.

In summary, each of the literature reviews explains a different definition of colleagueship based on one element of collegiality – culture, etiquette, or behavior. Furthermore, a review of the literature suggests there are degrees of colleagueship that are dependent on a number of

factors including organizational culture and contextual features. In studying collegiality, various researchers have either developed one or two of the collegial dimensions or they have focused on one form of collegiality to look at all three dimensions. However, no studies have been found that explore the naturally occurring professional collegial relationships in which all dimensions and forms of collegiality are utilized.

## Purpose of the Study

This study examines teachers' professional collegiality as it occurs within two urban comprehensive secondary schools. Specifically, this study uses teachers' perceptions to develop meaning for the term collegiality. This includes the multiple forms of collegial relationships teachers engage in, and the underlying dimensions that guide and direct their collegial relationships. Thus, the purpose of this study is to develop a more robust conception of teachers' professional collegiality and to generate hypotheses concerning teachers' collegiality at the secondary level.

The research questions include: 1) How do teachers in two urban high schools perceive professional collegial relationships?; and 2) What contextual features of the workplace do these high school teachers see as influencing the phenomenon of professional collegial relationships?

## Methods

### Subjects

This study was conducted in two urban, desegregated, comprehensive high schools (i.e., LaSalle and Monroe) located in a single school district of a Midwestern state.[1] The study's design holds constant district level context but allows examination of how school level variations

[1] To maintain confidentiality pseudonyms are used for all names, locations, and programs. As much as possible, identifiers with courses taught are also removed to further maintain anonymity of persons teaching specialized courses.

affect collegiality. The two schools are "average" urban comprehensive high schools based on data analysis conducted by the Center for Research on the Context of Secondary Schools (CRC Teacher Survey Data Report, 1991).[2] These schools were also selected because of their four-year involvement in a district-sponsored school improvement program that encouraged teachers to become collegial members of the school wide initiative to improve the school's educational programming and school climate.

Within each school a sample of fifteen teachers was chosen from a sampling frame that included all teachers who returned the CRC questionnaires. The sample of fifteen volunteer teachers represented approximately one fourth of the staff in each school and approximately one third of the teachers who returned the questionnaires. A random selection of teachers was completed within a dimensional sampling procedure that used department and gender as the dimensions (Glass & Hopkins, 1984). These dimensions were used based on findings from former research that suggested these demensions influence results if population is non-representative of the larger population being studied (Hare, 1962; Lieberman & Miller, 1984; McNeil, 1986). This process produced a sample group that was representative of the teacher population in each department. During interviewing it was determined that three more teachers in each site could add valuable information to this study. Thus, in all, eighteen teachers from each site were interviewed. The sample group included 21 men and 15 women from 9 departments in the schools. The sample groups also had relatively similar years of teaching and years in the district which was not part of the sampling process.

[2] Average was based on measures of school climate, classroom instruction, professional growth and development, department climates and policies as evaluated by questions from the High School & Beyond national survey.

## Procedure

This research is a descriptive study of what occurs in the daily lives of secondary teachers. As such, a focused ethnographic approach as described by Erickson (1977) was utilized. Focused ethnography assumes partial knowledge of a setting and consciously directed inquiry. In this study, prior theoretical and empirical work guided the inquiry and the formulation of semi-structured, open-ended interview questions. Specifically, the dimensions discussed in the literature review were used as a beginning of inquiry. During inquiry, further broadening of these dimensions occurred due to probing questions that brought forth subsequent information.

As this study was a part of a larger three year study of secondary teaching completed by the Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching (CRC) at Stanford University, the interview instrument followed the center format. Thus, documents and interviews completed in the larger study were utilized to further develop and verify the collegial interactions stated by the sample groups from each of these schools.

Data analysis was completed by use of Miles and Huberman (1984) coding system which consists of categorical coding of data, frequency counts of codings, and selection of descriptive quotations. The use of coding techniques allowed for data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing/verification. These procedures helped to summarize, present conclusions, and generate hypotheses about the phenomenon of teacher professional collegiality that occurs in urban comprehensive high schools.

## Results

The results of this study's findings are first discussed by use of the two research questions. Then the resulting hypothesis, a theory of collegiality, is presented.

Teachers' Perception of Collegiality

The findings suggest that these teachers have cultivated a complex culture of collegiality within which collegial relationships develop. The complexity resulted because teachers incorporated personal values, beliefs, and attitudes along with their perceptions about the collegial culture in the school to make decisions about potential colleagues available in the environment. Even though each individual teacher had a personalized set of values about collegiality, all teachers in the study appeared to agree on three concepts that were the basis of the culture of collegiality found in each school.

The three concepts emerged from data analysis concerning teacher perceptions of the professional collegial culture. First, the culture incorporated the value of independence (i.e., norms of privacy and individuality that pertained to classroom work) and interdependence (i.e., norms of support, continuity, and sharing that pertained to work beyond the classroom). These values were complementary rather than conflicting. Second, there was a specific etiquette of collegiality found in each school's culture. This etiquette of collegiality was a flexible unwritten code of conduct that reinforced the cultural values. Specifically, the results suggest a set of four standards of propriety used by teachers during collegial relationships (i.e., respond/do not initiate standard, honor competence/avoid criticism standards, courtesy standard, and humor standard). Teachers who did not adhere to some semblance of the standards were removed from individual teacher's personal list of potential colleagues. Third, each teacher developed a personal set of characteristics for colleagues that were used to make decisions about potential colleagues (i.e., cognitive knowledge; affective features that included common dispositions and attributes; relationships beyond the school; and demographic characteristics of gender, race, years of

teaching experience). Thus, teachers looked for peers who had valued knowledge and similar views, who they could trust and respect, and who were of the same gender, race, and age.

The complexity was found in the varied amount of information these teachers used to make decision about potential collegial colleagues. These teachers rarely entered into collegial relationships beyond the school but did so only when they had difficulty finding one or more of the personal characteristics available among staff members. For a large majority of the teachers shared fate and daily contacts were important for development and maintenance of collegial relationships. Thus, these teachers developed a complex perception of the phenomenon of teacher collegiality as it played out in his/her school. They valued collegial relationships that focused on coordination, sharing, and support but not classroom practice. But to help guide and give boundaries to collegial relationships that developed, the teachers used a set of etiquette standards. Furthermore, the teachers personally developed and used a set of characteristics for the development of a list of potential colleagues.

Contextual Features

In this study contextual factors were also a consideration as teachers focused on making decisions about collegial relationships. Specifically, three contextual factors were related to the development and maintenance of collegial relationships.

The first factor, issues, was usually the basis for the development of collegial relationships. Issues were topics of conversation both individually and contextually developed that more or less impacted teachers' work. Teachers entered into collegial relationships based on a personal need to become involved in an issue or multiple issues simultaneously. The teacher remained a member of the collegial group as long as the issue was of interest or they had the ability to secure a solution.

The second factor, forms of collegiality, were used to guide teacher interactions during collegial relationships. In other words, forms of collegiality reinforced and maintained the culture and etiquette of collegiality previously discussed. During the study, two additional forms not discussed in previous research were added to the continuum (i.e., networking and organization). Teachers engaged in multiple forms simultaneously either within one group or across groups. The size of the collegial groups also varied based on which form of collegiality was used --larger group membership was found when the forms were more independent and smaller group membership was found when the forms became more interdependent.

The third factor, general school environment features, refers to organizational arrangements, school governance and students. The first of these factors, organizational arrangements referred to time, class schedules, room assignments, and the building's physical structure. These were all found to be contributing factors that affected collegial relationships. These physical and organizational arrangements impacted who was available when and where. Thus, teacher choice of potential colleagues was reduced when these factors were incorporated. The second factor was school governance. This factor also affected the general school environment. Interestingly, the externally developed school improvement council program had little to no effect on collegial relationships. There were many factors as to why this program did not impact collegial relationships. One reason could be that teachers implemented policies that met personal needs or implemented policies loosely so the value of independence was maintained. Furthermore, there was a lack of support from administration. The result was that the governance factor had a divisive effect on the development of professional collegiality, and teachers developed and maintained relationships in spite of this program. The third factor, students, was also found to have little impact on the development of collegial relationships.

Even though students were a topic of discussion, it was rare that teachers developed collegial relationships based on a group of students. What was more prevalent was a personal need to work with a specific colleague about a specific group of students (e.g., student mobility or special programs).

In summary, the findings suggest that collegiality is a complex phenomenon that includes a wide variety of relationships focused on multiple professional matters. The flexibility of the phenomenon allows some collegial relationships to be merely supportive in nature, while others are more "soul bearing" in terms of focusing on the practice of teaching and the work that takes place behind closed doors. Having daily contact was important because it enabled these teachers to build trust, understand one another's beliefs, values, dispositions, etc., and have a shared fate. Teachers entered into collegial relationships based on decisiens they made concerning who they approached, what they approached them about, and how they interacted. To make these decisions, teachers used information that was both individually developed and developed in the environment.

The results of this study concur with prior studies on the phenomenon of collegial relationships is some ways. What this study brings to the continuing discussion about teacher workplace collegiality are three ideas. First, this study unpacks the collegial culture found in two urban high schools and suggests a set of etiquette standards used by teachers to develop and maintain collegial relationships. Second, this study suggests there are peer characteristics that impact the development of potential colleagues. Lastly, and most importantly, this study moves beyond former research to suggest that teachers make decisions and choices about collegial relationships based on personal values, beliefs, etiquette standards along with the issues, forms of collegiality and other contextual features. The research literature concerning the development of

and maintenance of collegial relationships, collegial communities, and school improvement have not till this time described or discussed the decisions that teachers make concerning their professional collegial encounters. It is the consequences of the decision-making process that results in a system of collegiality within each building that provides flexibility and cohesiveness to meet the personal needs of teachers.

## The System of Collegiality

The data suggests a theory concerning the system of collegiality found in these two high schools. This system of collegiality existed in both schools and was very complex. The system was based on developing and maintaining individual needs. In this section, the system of collegiality is explained.

The findings suggest that each school maintained a number of collegial groups which, together, functioned as a collegial system. Because collegial relationships rarely extended beyond the school, the school can be likened to a highly bounded system within which a collegial system resides.

Teachers work within this bounded system. They bring to it or learn within it the values and beliefs of the collegial culture, including the values and etiquette of collegiality. This culture of collegiality is relatively stable. It is maintained over time because of the flexibility inherent in the culture. That is, teachers have the ability to place more or less emphasis on different cultural values and etiquette of collegiality standards at various times. Teachers also bring with them personal values, beliefs, attitudes, etc. concerning personal characteristics of peers they perceive as important for developing collegial relationships. These personal characteristics are generated and used by individuals in the system to form relationships. Thus, each individual enters the

system and creates a list of potential colleagues based on perceptions of the collegial culture and desired personal characteristics of colleagues they have developed.

Issues, forms of collegiality and other contextual features are also found in the system. As issues enter the system, collegial groups start to form. But these groups are not separate and distinct. The concept of overlapping circles within circles is suggested as the structure of collegial groups. Larger circles have many members, while smaller circles have fewer members. The overlapping of circles indicates that teachers belong to more than one collegial group. The circles in this system of collegiality also relate to the forms of collegiality. Larger groups of colleagues form around independent forms of collegiality, while smaller groups engage in more interdependent forms of collegiality. Overlapping mainly occurs in more independent forms. This overlapping allows for networking within the system so everyone understands each other. In other words, teachers' views, opinions, and values flow between groups engaged in more independent forms of collegiality. The complexity is that no one single form is used in any one collegial group. Within more independent collegial groups, members use more than one form of collegiality but usually not more than three forms. In more interdependent collegial groups, teachers can use all seven forms of collegiality.

Teachers join multiple collegial groups simultaneously based on the number of issues that are important to them. In order to join collegial groups, teachers make complex decisions about entering or forming a group based on a large amount of information. Teachers use information about the collegial culture, potential colleagues accessible at the time, the issue, the forms of collegiality available and deemed appropriate, along with other contextual features to make decisions on collegial relationships.

There are always multiple issues entering the system constantly, so teachers continually evaluate and re-evaluate personal needs as to the importance of a particular issue. The outcome is that the issues are in constant flux. But the loosely-coupled system maintains stability over time because the system allows teachers to flow freely within it, to work on personal needs, and to maintain personally held values of what aspects of work are independent of collegial relationships. Thus, teachers enter the system and engage in collegial relationships when issues arise that jeopardize their value of independence or when they need to meet personal needs.

In conclusion, the system of collegiality is based on personal beliefs, values and ideas participants bring to the system and also learn when in the system. As teachers are faced with situations, problems, and issues that enter the system, they make decisions about engaging in collegial relationships. These collegial relationships last only as long as the issue is of importance to the individual or group.

## Conclusion

As found in this study, there is a difference between definitions of professional collegiality dependent on who is doing the defining – teachers, researchers, reformers. These differences are based on how the various groups define professional work. Past research on the phenomenon of professional collegiality suggests that teachers rarely enter into collegial relationships based on their professional work – that which takes place in the classroom between teacher and student. This study confirms that teachers rarely engage in this form of collegial relationships. But, the strength of this study lies in the analysis of life in ordinary high schools and how teacher engage in collegial relationships that focus on a wide variety of other important aspects of work – carrying out policy, gaining knowledge about the school, gathering information about peers, etc. To that end, this study presents a theory as to why the individualism,

presentizm, and conservatism of collegiality remain strong. Specifically, teachers naturally enter a complex collegial system so the work of teaching is made easier, more self-fulfilling and meets personal needs. If schools are to move forward and enter into more interdependent forms of collegial work, administrators, policy makers and teachers need to understand the naturally occurring phenomenon of collegiality and use this information to nurture a different collegial arrangement within the school organization. Thus, implementation of a different system of collegiality would require an understanding of other aspects of the educational setting beyond organizational structure and contextual features.

This study suggests that policy frames centered on the formal structural, material, rule-making and reorganized governance system as routes to better schools are questionable. Policy frames and strategies that center on situated norms and beliefs of practice may be more productive. This means that policy must come to terms with the tension between individual and community concepts, and the self-interest versus organizational interest that teachers hold. Specifically, when teachers are focused on self-interest, other-interests remain obsolete. Policies that focus on situated norms and beliefs of practice and on norms of mutual support and obligation could be more productive. Thus, a closer examination of teachers' orientation to students, teaching, learning, and subject matter could help in the development of specific strategies to cultivate and support values and norms compatible with successful schools based on successful students. In that this study furthers the understanding of how values are maintained, strategies to alter these values may be more easily developed.

Second, policy reformers need to understand the complexity of the collegial system and how externally developed programs focused at the school level may be inappropriate. The findings in this study suggest that the use of multiple communities within the school may be a

more appropriate level of reform. These multiple communities extend beyond the department level to include various sub-groups. This is not to suggest that the complexity found in the collegial system developed in this study is chaotic, but rather is a well ordered system that works to maintain itself. By examining the system more closely, policy frames could be developed that use the strengths of the system to alter the work completed within it.

In conclusion, to implement a policy frame or strategy without understanding the inter-relatedness of the school's collegial system and the context in which it resides will result in limited change. This is because the collegial system as described in this study is complex, coherent and resilient to the approaches suggested in the current educational reforms. To develop professional collegial relationships that are long lasting, focused on the practice of teaching, used to have teachers engage in thoughtful problem solving and professional development, current institutional structures and individual teachers' ethos will need to be addressed simultaneously.

## References


Bess, J. L. (1988). Collegiality and bureaucracy in modern universities: The influence of information and power on decision-making structures. New York: Teacher College Press.

Blase, J. J. (1987). Political interactions among teachers: Sociocultural context in the schools. Urban Education, 22(3), 286-309.

Blumer, H. (1957). Collective Behavior. In A. M. Lee (Ed.), Principles of Sociology. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc.

Brookover, W., Beady, C., Flood, P., Schweitzer, J., & Wisenbaker, J. (1979). School social systems and student achievement: Schools can make a difference. New York: Praeger.

Bucher, R., & Strauss, A. (1961). Professions in progress. American Journal of Sociology, 66(4), 325-334.

Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching. (1990-91). Continuation application for year four (Vol. 1: Technical Document: Grant No.: OERI - G0087C0235). CA: Stanford University.

Cogan, M. L. (1953). Toward a definition of profession. Harvard Educational Review, 23(Winter), 33-50.

Cohen, E. (1976). Problems and prospects of teaming. Educational Research Quarterly, 1(2), 49-63.

Cohen, E. (1981). Sociology looks at team teaching. Research in Sociology of Education and Socialization, 2, 163-193.

Cohen, M. (1987). Improving school effectiveness: Lessons from research. In V. Richardson-Koehler (Ed.), Educator's handbook: A research perspective. New York: Longman.

Cusick, P. A. (1983). The egalitarian ideal and the american high school: Studies of three schools. NY: Longman.

Edmonds, R.R. (1983). An overview of school improvement programs (Occasional Paper 67). East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, Institute for Research on Teaching.

Erickson, F. (1977). Some approaches to inquiry in school/community ethnography. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 8(3), 58-69.

Feiman-Nemser, S., & Floden, R. E. (1986). The cultures of teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of research on teacher (3rd ed.). New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.

Freidson, E. (1984). The changing nature of professional control. Annual Review of Sociology, 10, 1-20.

Glass, G.V., & Hopkins, K.D. (1984). Statistical methods in education and psychology. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Grimmett, P. P., & Crehan, E. P. (1989). Teacher development, collegiality, and instructional supervision: The case of Audrey and Barry. Paper presented at the International Conference on Teacher Development: Policies, Practices, and Research (Toronto, Ontario Canada).

Gross, E. (1958). Work and society. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

Hallinger, P., & Richardson, D. (1988). Models of shared leadership: Evolving stuructures and relationships. The Urban Review, 20 (4), 229-245.

Hammersley, M. (1984). Staffroom News. In A. Hargreaves & P. Woods (Eds.), Classrooms and staffrooms: The sociology of teachers and teaching (pp. 203-214). Milton Keys, England: Open University Press.

Hare, A. P. (1962). Handbook of small group research. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.

Hargreaves, A. (1984). Experience counts, theory doesn't: How teachers talk about their work. Sociology of Education, 57 (4), 244-254.

Hargreaves, A. (1992). Time and teachers' work: An analysis of the intensification thesis. Teachers College Record, 94 (Fall), 87-108.

Hargreaves, A. (1993). Individualism and individuality: Reinterpreting the teacher culture. In J. W. Little & M. W. McLaughlin (Eds.), Teachers' work: Individuals, colleagues, and contexts (pp. 51-76).

Huberman, M. (1993). The model of the indpendent artisan in teachers' professional relations. In J. W. Little & M. W. McLaughlin (Eds.), Teachers' work: Individuals, colleagues, and contexts (pp.11-50). New York: Teachers College Press.

Johnson, S. M. (1990). Teachers at work: Achieving success in our schools. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (1984). Teachers, their world, and their work: Implications for school improvement. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Lightfoot, S. L. (1983). The good high school: Portraits of character and culture. New York: Basic.

Little, J. W. (1981). School success & staff development: The role of staff development in urban desegregated schools (Contract No. 400-79-0049). Boulder, CO: Final Report prepared for Center for Action Research, Inc.

Little, J. W. (1982). Norms of collegiality and experimentation: Workplace conditions of school success. American Educational Research Journal, 19(3), 325-340.

Little, J. W. (1987). Teachers as colleagues. In V. Richardson-Koehler (Ed.), Educators' handbook: A research perspective. New York: Longman.

Little, J. W. (1990). The persistence of privacy: Autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. Teachers College Record, 91(4), 509-536.

Little, J. W. (1992). Opening the black box of professional community. In A. Lieberman (Ed.), The changing contexts of teaching. 91st yearbook, volume I (157-178). Chicago, IL: The National Society for the study of Education.

Lortie, D. C. (1975). School teacher: A sociological study. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McLaughlin, M. (1987). Learning from experience: Lessons from policy implementation. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 9(2), 171-178.

McNeil, L. M. (1986). Contradictions of control: School structure and school knowledge. New York: Routledge.

Metz, M. H. (1986). Different by design: The context and character of three magnet schools. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Ogawa, R. T., & White, P. A. (1994). School-based management: An overview. In S. A. Mohrman, P. Wohlstetter, & Associates (Eds.), School-based management: Organizing for high performance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Purkey, S. C., & Smith, M. S. (1983). Effective schools: A review. The Elementary School Journal, 83(4), 427-452.

Reinken, B. J. (1995). Collegiality: A descriptive study of teachers' professional collegial relationships in two urban high schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, East Lansing.

Richardson, V. (1990). Significant and worthwhile change in teaching practice. Educational Researcher, 19(7), 10-18.

Rosenholtz, S. (1989). Teachers workplace: The social organization of schools. New York: Longman.

Rowan, B. (1990). Commitment and control: Alternative strategies for the organizational design of schools. In C. B. Cazden (Ed.), Review of Research in Education (Vol. 16). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Schiffer, J. (1980). School renewal through staff development. New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992). Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sergiovanni, T. J., & Starratt, R. J. (1988). Supervision: Human Perspective (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Starr, P. (1982). The social transformation of American medicine. New York: Basic Books.

Sykes, G. (1990). Fostering teacher professionalism in schools. In R. F. Elmore & Associates, Restructuring schools. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Talbert, J. E., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1994). Teacher professionalism in local school contexts. American Journal of Education, 102 (2), 123-153.

Zahorik, J. A. (1987). Teachers' collegial interactions: An exploratory study. The Elementary School Journal, 87(4), 385-396.